The main findings of the appraisal are as under:

* Around 59 per cent AWCs studied have no toilet facility and in 17 AWCs this facility was found to be unsatisfactory;
* Around 75% of AWCs have pucca buildings;
* 44 per cent AWCs covered under the study were found to be lacking PSE kits:
* Disruption of supplementary nutrition was noticed on an average of 46.31 days at Anganwadi level. Major reasons causing disruption was reported as delay in supply of items of supplementary nutrition;
* 36.5 per cent mothers did not report weighing of new born children;
* 29 per cent children were born with a low weight which was below normal (less than 2500 gm);
* 37 per cent AWWs reported non-availability of materials/aids for Nutrition and Health Education (NHED).

Stiffer Anti-dowry Laws

2933. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intends to make anti-dowry laws stiffer;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the recommendations of the National Commission for Women in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that courts have gone on record stating that the dowry laws are absued to a large extent; and

(d) if so, the safeguards being considered to prevent the above of dowry laws?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) National Commission for Women has made some recommendations for the amendment of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and Section 304B IPC (dowry death). The main points of the recommendations are given in the enclosed statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) The Ministry does not have any information on misuse of dowry laws to a large extent.

Statement

Main Points of Recommendations of National Commission for Women.

The National Commission for women has made the following main recommendations:—

(i) The words 'in connection with the marriage of said parties' occurring in section 2 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 relating to the definition of dowry, may be deleted.

(ii) The penalty laid down in the said Act for giving dowry may be reduced to imprisonment of not less than one year and fine of not less than Rs. 15,000/- unless the person can prove that he was compelled to give dowry;

(iii) Amend section 6 of the said Act (dowry to be for the benefit of the wife or her heirs) in order to provide that in the event of the death of any woman, whether due to natural causes or otherwise, whether within 7 years or after 7 years of her marriage, any property to which she is entitled under the section will be transferred to her children or to her parents if she has no children.

(iv) Amend section 4 (1) (a) to provide for jurisdiction of courts.

(v) Empower the Service Provider or the Protection Officer functioning under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, under section 7 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, to lodge a complaint of commission of an offence.

(vi) The words 'soon before her death' occurring in sub-section (1) of section 304B IPC (dowry death) may be replaced by the words 'anytime before her death' and any death occurring in the circumstances mentioned in the sub-section even after 7 years of marriage should be considered as dowry death. The minimum punishment laid down in the sub-section (2) of section 304B IPC should be raised from 7 years to 10 years and death may be prescribed as the maximum penalty alternate to the existing penalty of imprisonment for life.

Chairman of Punjab Social Welfare Board

2934. SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) who is Chairman of Punjab Social Welfare Board and when she was appointed alongwith the duration of the term of the aid post;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government is continuing her even after the expiry of the term, if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Punjab Government has sent the panel of names for the new appointment and if so, what action has been taken thereon; and

(d) whether Government has changed its policy where in the State Government has to give the panel of names and selection has to be made by the Chairman, National Social Welfare Board?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Smt. Ratna is the Chairperson of Punjab State Social Welfare Board. Her appointment as Chairperson of the State Social Welfare Board for two years from the date of assuming charge *i.e.* 29.9.2004 was notified by the State Government which through a revised notification issued by the State Government extended her tenure from two to three years. The proposal for the reconstitution of the Punjab State Social Welfare Board was not received from the State Government even after the end of the term of the State Board on 28.9.2007. Therefore, following Rule 3(v) of the Rules Governing Composition and Functions of the State Boards, the term of Smt. Ratna as Chairperson of the State Board was extended on 3.10.2007 until